

136570831 5790274
13657083

illinois beach

I917.7321
IBEA
1973
c.3



I 917.7321

IBEA

1973

C.3

THE PARK

Stretching leisurely three and a half miles along the sandy shores of Lake Michigan lies Illinois Beach State Park, located between Waukegan and Zion in Lake County.

The 1,917-acre park offers a variety of uses: a general recreation area in the north portion of the park, a nature study area between Beach Road and Dead River and a wildlife refuge area south of Dead River. The Lake Michigan dunes that run through the park contain the only natural beach and dunes association in Illinois.

HISTORY

Early Usage: The dunes area was originally part of the Algonquin nation and the peaceful and industrious Potawatomi tribe dwelt in the area. Arrowheads, axeheads, mallets and other artifacts have been found in the area to attest to their presence here long before the arrival of white men. Jean Nicolet was probably the first voyager to visit the dunes area. It is known that Jolliet, Toni, Hennepin, Gravier and Pinet also passed through. Father Marquette's diary of December 23rd to 27th, 1673, states that his party landed on the shore, probably at the mouth of Dead River, and camped for several days.

The area became part of the Northwest Territory and passed through many changes of governmental authority between 1787 and 1836. When Illinois became a state in 1818, the dunes area was occupied by transient hunters and trappers. In 1836 a treaty was made with the Indians, who moved westward, and the area became part of Lake County.

Preservation Efforts: The Lake Michigan dunes area has long been recognized for its unique flora, abundant wildlife and scenic beauty. F.C. Gates, Victor Shelford and Pepon all studied the area in detail. Preservation of the area was

considered as early as 1888 when Robert Douglass, a Waukegan nurseryman, and Jens Jensen, a famous landscape architect, discussed making it a regional park. Efforts to preserve the dunes area through legislation began in the 1920's. Industry began to encroach from the south, sand mining activities began and parts of the area were taken over for pasture and cottages. During World War II troops stationed at Fort Sheridan used the area for practicing tank maneuvers. The first American western was filmed in the area in 1914. About 1925 the Essanay moving picture company used this site as a location for many of their films with Charlie Chaplin as one of their stars.

Becomes a Park: It wasn't until 1948 that the state acquired the first land of what is now Illinois Beach State Park. In 1950 the Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society was formed with its goals being the preservation and protection of the natural qualities of Illinois Beach State Park. It was through the efforts of this society and the Department of Conservation that the area south of Beach Road was dedicated in 1964 as the first Illinois nature preserve.



Sand prairie

THE NATURAL SCENE

The beach, the large expanses of marsh and prairie vegetation, the abundant wildlife, the migratory birds, the dunes and its location on Lake Michigan combine to make the dunes area a unique natural resource for the people of Illinois.

Geologic History: The dunes area has a complex geologic history. The entire area was covered by ice during the different glacial periods. As the ice retreated and opened the southern part of the Lake Michigan basin, the melt waters raised the level of the lake to 640 feet, extending approximately to the present-day location of Sheridan Road. The lake that was formed is called glacial Lake Chicago. Beaches were established at each stage of water level as it lowered to the present-day level of Lake Michigan. This resulted in the formation of the series of ridges and swales which are conspicuous features of the dunes area. Wind has reworked the sand deposits nearest the lake and small dunes have formed.

Plants: Over 500 species of plants have been recorded in the dunes area. Along the shore of Lake Michigan sea-rocket, winged pigweed and cocklebur are the common species. Further back, beach wormwood and such sand binding plants as sand cherry, dune willow, beach grass and sand reed grass are found. Bearberry and creeping juniper form large mats which stabilize the blowouts and dunes.

Sand prairie is found on the stabilized dunes and ridges. The common grasses are little bluestem, switchgrass, Indian grass and sand reed grass. Blazing star, fringed puccoon, lupine, flowering spurge, lead plant, bird-foot violet, pinweed, black-eyed Susan and downy Indian painted cup are some conspicuous flowering plants found in the sand prairie. Prickly pear cactus forms large colonies in this dry habitat. Wet prairies contain bluejoint grass, prairie cordgrass, reed grass, big bluestem and sedges. Grass pink orchid, foxglove and cardinal flower are found here. Alkaline fens are found in some of the swales nearer the lake. The common



species are sedges, Ohio goldenrod, fringed gentian, Kalm's lobelia and shrubby cinquefoil.

Forest: Scrub-oak forests, dominated by black oak and Hill's oak, are found on some of the sandy ridges. White oak and bur also occur. The humus layer beneath these trees is poorly developed and the forests have an open, savanna-like appearance. Remnants of the prairie and such plants as poison ivy, wild grape and starry false solomon's seal are commonly found in the understory.

The man-made pine forest was started about a century ago by Robert Douglass, a nurseryman, who scattered seeds of various species of pines on the prairie-covered ridges south of the mouth of Dead River. The seeds germinated and the pines grew. Presently Austrian pine and Scotch

pine are thriving and reproducing in the area. Some white pines, pitch pines and European larch are also present.

Large expanses of marsh, dominated by cattails and bulrushes occur in the swales and poorly drained areas in the western part of the dunes area. The cattails form nearly solid stands. Water plantain, swamp milkweed, common bone set, blue flag and water parsnip are found growing in the marshes.

Wildlife: A variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians are found in the dunes area. The shore of Lake Michigan is a natural migration route and many species of ducks, geese, gulls, shore birds and occasionally a bald eagle, osprey or peregrine falcon can be seen during the spring and fall migrations. Diving ducks can be seen

on the lake during the winter months. Green heron, great blue heron, Virginia rail, sora, American bittern, black crowned night heron and red-winged blackbird can be found in the marshes. On the prairies and dunes can be found such species as horned lark, Eastern meadowlark, American woodcock, common snipe, upland plover, field sparrow, killdeer and spotted sandpiper. Downy woodpeckers, mourning doves, cedar waxwings and occasionally a screech owl or great horned owl can be seen in the wooded areas. Common hern, a rare breeding bird in Illinois, nests in small numbers in the area. Ringneck pheasant are common to the area.

Dead River: A unique feature of the dunes area is the Dead River. It is a sluggish stream which drains the southern part of the dunes area and

carries run-off waters from the surrounding uplands. During most of the year the mouth of the Dead River is blocked by a sand bar built up by storm waves. When the mouth is blocked, the Dead River forms an elongated pond. When the water reaches a high enough level, such as during a rainstorm, the water breaks through the sand bar and the pond, and surrounding marshes are drained. In the water are found many species of aquatic plants. Pondweeds, water-milfoil, yellow pond lily, pickerel weed and giant bur-reed are common. White buttercup and common arrowhead are found along the marshy edges of the stream. The most common fish are blunt nose minnows, black bullheads and several species of shiners. Northern pike breeds in the wet meadows along the ditches and the Dead River when the water is high and the mouths of these streams are open to the lake.

FACILITIES

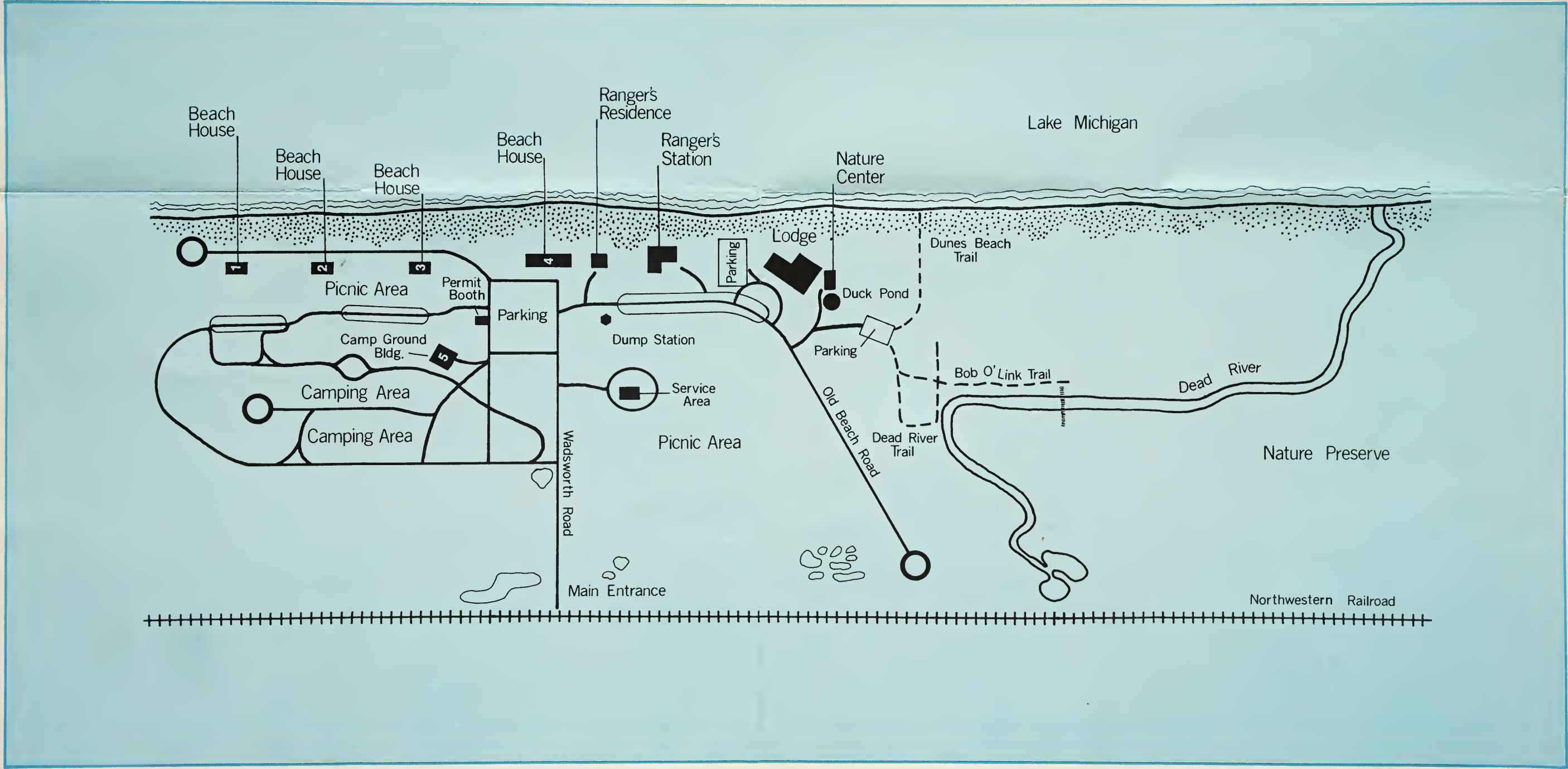
Camping: A camping permit must be secured from the park ranger to use either the tent camping sites or the trailer pads, many of which have electric service. Showers and flush toilets are available to the campers in the recently completed utility building, which also has facilities to accommodate the physically handicapped. A sanitary dump station is nearby.

Swimming: During the summer season, swimming is permitted along the 1,000-foot sandy shoreline, with lifeguards on duty from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Four bath-houses provide hot showers, flush toilets and dressing rooms for men and women. A children's playground area is also on the beach.

Concession: Beach house #4 also includes a camper store as well as a souvenir and gift shop, both of which are open to all park visitors. Various types of refreshments may be purchased here.

Trails: There are many designated trails throughout the park and the nature preserve for hiking and observing nature. The park interpreter conducts regularly scheduled nature hikes the year round.

Fishing: Fishing is not allowed along the beach area or in the nature preserves area. However, there are several small fishing ponds for the visitor.



Lodge: The concrete, glass and stone lodge has 106 Lanai-type guest rooms, each with color television, air-conditioning, sliding door and private terrace. There are dining facilities for small or large groups, private conferences. The lodge also has a bar, a game room and a souvenir and gift shop.

All lodge guests have access to an indoor olympic pool with a tot's wading pool and an outdoor pool. There are also shower rooms, tennis courts and shuffleboard courts. Near the park is an 18-hole golf course.

The lodge is only a few minutes from Van's airport where planes are met by the station wagon upon request.

Picnicking: There are ample picnic grounds with shaded areas. Tables and stoves are provided but the visitor must bring his own firewood and charcoal.





Lodge: The concrete, glass and stone lodge has 106 Lanai-type guest rooms, each with a color television, air-conditioning, sliding glass door and private terrace. There are dining facilities for small or large groups, parties or private conferences. The lodge also has a snack bar, a game room and a souvenir and gift shop.

All lodge guests have access to an all season olympic pool with a tot's wading pool and locker-shower rooms, tennis courts and shuffleboard courts. Near the park is an 18-hole golf course.

The lodge is only a few minutes from Waukegan's airport where planes are met by the lodge station wagon upon request.

Picnicking: There are ample picnic grounds in shaded areas. Tables and stoves are provided but the visitor must bring his own firewood or charcoal.



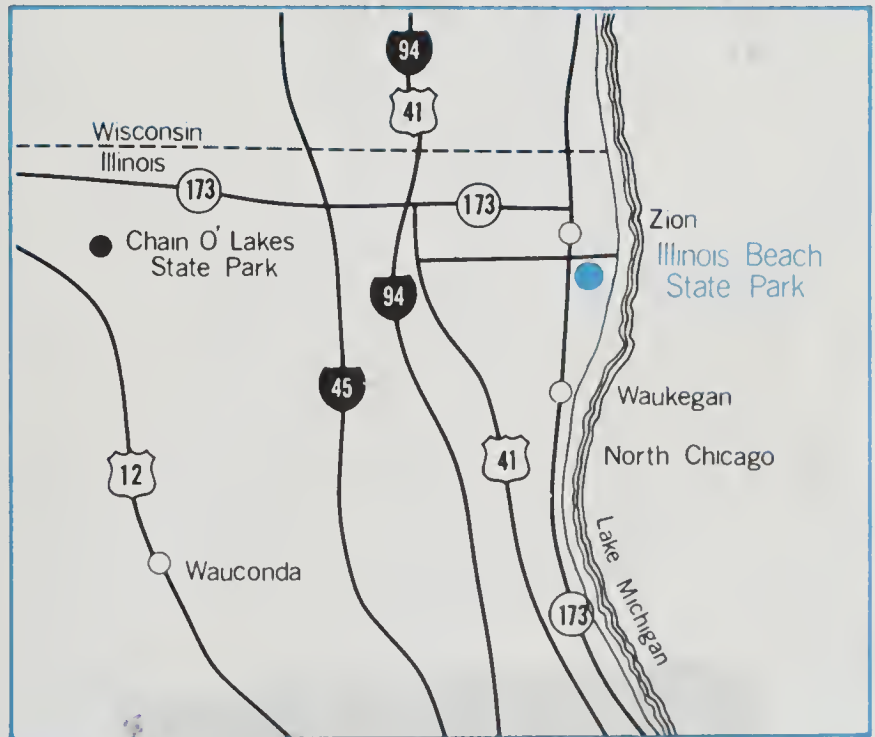
FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous State Parks and Memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach (no cabins), Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For further information concerning Illinois State Parks and Memorials write to the Department of Conservation, Division of Education, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.



ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

JUN 4 1973

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois

Issued by

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Division of Parks and Memorials

100M-5-73



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 122554915